



# Senator Wayne Allard's Report from Washington

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## Debt Repayment Plan

For the third consecutive year, I introduced legislation in the U.S. Senate to repay the debt. My plan would have established a schedule to use the on-budget surplus to pay down the debt and amortize those debt payments just like you would a home mortgage. By keeping the budget balanced and establishing a set schedule of payments, the debt could be eliminated in twenty years, thereby saving the American people more than three trillion dollars in interest payments while protecting social security. Although my plan failed to pass the Senate as an amendment to the Budget Resolution, I will continue my efforts to make debt repayment a priority.

## Social Security Earnings Test Elimination Act

On March 22, I joined my Senate colleagues in unanimously passing H.R.5, the Social Security Earnings Test Elimination Act. I have long disapproved of this punitive system that places restrictions on a person's right to work, and an employer's ability to hire the right person for the job. It is important that seniors have the ability to continue their active lifestyles without facing a penalty on a benefit they have earned. I am pleased that President Clinton signed this bill into law, ensuring that millions of American seniors can continue working after age 65 without facing a reduction in social security benefits.

## Marriage Penalty Tax

This month, the Senate failed to pass legislation to end the Marriage penalty tax. I voted in favor of eliminating this tax and providing relief for the over 400,000 couples in Colorado who incur an additional tax burden simply because they are married. The current tax code penalizes families dependent on two wage earners to provide for their family. I am disappointed that the Senate failed in taking this important step toward making our tax code a fairer system. Eliminating the marriage penalty tax will provide help directly to working families, without new programs and more layers of bureaucracy.

## FROM THE SENATOR

### Rocky Mountain National Park Overflights Ban Signed Into Law



On April 5 President Clinton signed into law Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization legislation, commonly referred to as "AIR 21." In addition to continued financial support for our nation's aviation infrastructure, the FAA reauthorization contains a provision that I introduced in the Senate to permanently ban commercial helicopter tour overflights in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Rocky Mountain National Park is a spectacular area in the Rockies located about 70 miles from Denver. The park receives nearly three million visitors each year, almost as many as Yellowstone national park, which is eight times its size. The park is easily accessible, yet continues to provide quiet, solitude, and remoteness to visitors, especially in the back country.

Several problems are specific to this mountainous park. The elevation of the Park does not allow a large minimum altitude, therefore, according to the National Park Service, natural quiet is unlikely if tour overflights are permitted at all. In addition, the terrain, consisting of many 13,000 foot peaks and narrow valleys, coupled with unpredictable weather presents serious safety concerns. Also, the unique terrain of Rocky Mountain National Park would cause air traffic to cumulate over the popular lower portions of the park as pilots are forced to navigate around the dangerous peaks and high winds.

Proposals for helicopter sightseeing at Rocky Mountain National Park were particularly distressing. Not only would the overflights have been concentrated

directly over the most popular portions of the park, but more powerful, and louder helicopters would be required to achieve the necessary lift at a high altitude. This kind of noise would seriously detract from the enjoyment of other park visitors and also could have a negative impact on the resources and values of the park itself. It is important to affirm that this legislation will only ban commercial tour overflights. It is not intended to have any adverse effect on emergency, military and administrative flights or on commercial high-level airlines or private planes.

State and local officials in areas adjacent to the park, including Larimer County, Grand County, and the City of Estes Park recognize the unique characteristics of the park in relation to commercial air tours. I have worked closely with park officials and local representatives in the development of this legislation.

In 1995, the *Denver Post* editorialized that the FAA should make Rocky Mountain National Park off-limits to low-flying aircraft use, "the sooner the better." Now, after five years, my legislation to implement a permanent ban on scenic overflights has finally been signed into law.

Surveys have indicated that more than 90% of park visitors feel that tranquility is very important. In these fast-changing, bustling times I think it has become increasingly important that people feel they can escape their daily grind and find peace and comfort in a natural environment. Rocky Mountain National Park is a state, regional and national treasure. I am pleased that for years to come the glory and grandeur of Rocky Mountain National Park will continue to provide a serene environment to millions of visitors.

### Questions? Comments? Concerns? Contact one of my offices....

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